

**Department of
Conservation &
Development**

Community Development Division

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**Contra
Costa
County**



Catherine Kutsuris
Director

August 12, 2010

Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Communications Workgroup

Dear Chair Isenberg and Council Members,

Enclosed with this letter are responses from the Contra Costa County Conservation and Development Department to the questions prepared for the workgroup meeting on the topic of Communications. This workgroup is supporting the development of the Interim Plan and Delta Plan. The responses are organized in the same order as the discussions questions in the meeting invitation. Please call me if you have any questions on this material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven L. Goetz".

Steven L. Goetz, Deputy Director
Conservation and Transportation Planning Programs

Enclosure

Cc: Contra Costa County Legislative Delegation
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Delta Counties Coalition
Contra Costa Council

Communications Workgroup

The Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) posed 11 questions to this work group. Question 12 was added by Contra Costa County. The questions that are answered are numbered and in italic type font.

1. Who are the audiences the DSC should reach as it moves forward?

The DSC needs to communicate to the audience that has been commenting on the Interim Plan. The DSC has issued two drafts on the Interim Delta Plan (Interim Plan) and has received many thoughtful comments on each draft. Yet, the DSC has not responded to these comments. Appendix III of the 1st Draft Interim Plan lists summary points of stakeholders and public recommendations for *illustrative* purposes only. From reviewing that appendix, it is impossible to evaluate whether all comments were considered. Moreover, the format of these bullet-point summaries means that more nuanced or complex issues raised in the comments may have been lost in translation. The 2nd Draft removes this content from Appendix III. Your audience does not know which comments you support or why you have chosen not to incorporate other comments in the Interim Plan.

The DSC needs to communicate in some detail its position on the comments it has received from its current audience. We are hopeful that the next draft of the Interim Plan will include a staff report that provides detailed discussion of the various issues raised in comments on the plan. Ideally, DSC staff should prepare a response-to-comments document regarding the Interim Plan in order to provide opportunities for discussion among Council members and opportunities for public dialogue.

2. If you were to draft the top three communications goals the council should focus on, what would they be?

- Promote collaborative problem solving by improving communications within the DSC and with other federal, state and local agencies working in the Delta.
- Communications should explain the *how* and *why* of issues, and not just the *what*. Describe the disposition of significant issues raised, particularly when the DSC's position is at variance with the comments.
- Promote broad and effective engagement of citizens in the affairs of the DSC. This can be accomplished by providing timely and accessible information and through establishment of formal and ad hoc advisory groups. By fostering an environment where citizens are informed and involved in the decision-making process, the Delta becomes a better place.

3. What would be the top messages that you would expect the council to focus on in all communication outreach materials and tools being developed?

Messages will be timely, messages will be supported by the DSC's mission or the Delta Plan, and feedback, if requested, will be thoughtfully considered by the DSC.

5. What communications tool should the council look to utilize to get its information into a broad base of audiences?

- **Prepare a detailed work plan that will cover the tasks of the DPC between now and 12/31/11.** This comment is explained in the County's August 3rd correspondence on the Interim Plan. A work plan will help the DSC use its resources effectively and manage relationships with others to achieve its goals. The work plan can focus energy, communicates intent to others, and provides accountability. The work plan template included as Appendix III in the 2nd Draft of the Interim Plan is suitable for developing this initial work plan. The DSC work plan should be available for review and comment prior to adoption. It should be updated with each budget cycle.
- **Prepare a schedule and flow chart illustrating interaction with other agencies and organizations with responsibilities in the Delta.** This schematic will foster a high level of collaboration among agencies as the Delta Plan is developed. One of the primary reasons the DSC (and other governance structures) were created was to bring a greater level of organizational consistency to the great array of agencies with responsibilities in the Delta. In particular, a high level of interaction among the DSC, DPC and Conservancy is recommended.

11. How should the council keep local, state, and federal elected officials, as well as other agencies, informed about its activities and timelines?

- **Establish a process for stakeholder input.** To date, the DSC does not have an established, ongoing process to receive stakeholder input. It is important that a process be established that allows for comment and response, and some type of dialogue between the DSC and commentators. In addition, a deliberative process among stakeholders is necessary if a broad-based collaboration on issues is desired. The DSC should create a process that insures stakeholder response to issues, either through an iterative two-way process or through a stakeholder group to encourage full vetting of issues and specifically to establish consensus on major issues where feasible and appropriate prior to inclusion in the Interim Plan and Delta Plan.
- **Monitor environmental notices for projects that occur in the DSC planning area.** Notify the Office of Planning and Research that environmental notices it receives for projects within the DSC's planning area should be sent to the DSC to fulfill its obligations under the Water Code (§85204, §85212 and §85225), and consult with the Office on procedures for notifying the DSC of other projects of potential concern pursuant to Water Code §85210(j). DSC staff should prepare an inventory of such notices received to include with the DSC agendas. Staff should report on relevant notices to fulfill the DSC's responsibilities.
- **Notify all public agencies that may have potential covered actions.** Notification should go to all public agencies with jurisdiction or activities in the DSC's planning area. The notice should describe their statutory responsibility pursuant to Water Code

§85225 and the schedule for completing the Delta Plan. The DSC should advise the agencies that they should monitor development of the Delta Plan so if an agency approves a covered action after the Delta Plan is adopted, a certification of consistency can be anticipated.

- **Consider holding workshops for proposed regulations or procedures.** Workshops should be considered if a proposed rule or regulation affects a significant number of entities, such as procedures for potential covered actions. Prior to finalizing the regulation/procedures, consider whether workshops will help affected entities understand how the procedures would work and would allow affected entities to provide more constructive comments to the DSC.
- **Consider broadening the committee of agencies responsible for implementing the Delta Plan.** Water Code §85204 requires the DSC to establish such a committee. Through this committee each agency is to coordinate its actions pursuant to the Delta Plan with the DSC and other relevant agencies. It may be worthwhile to include federal agencies that coordinate among themselves through their Bay Delta Action Plan. The DSC may also consider including local jurisdictions in the Delta who will be hosting the projects, programs and actions included in the Delta Plan. The committee of agencies may be best used as a technical advisory committee for the DSC.
- **Formalize cooperation between the DSC and the Departments of Water Resources and Fish & Game on the BDCP.** This comment is explained in the County's August 3rd correspondence on the Interim Plan. This agreement should clarify and define the roles and responsibilities of the DSC and the departments during preparation of the BDCP and related reports. Responsibilities include coordination with the lead agencies on meeting the requirements of Water Code §85320, providing preliminary deliverables and technical analyses for review and comment by the Independent Science Board and the DSC consultants.

12. (Contra Costa County Question) What significant communications problems have you observed?

The development of the Interim Plan has not been conducive to public comments. Iterations have been rapid and deadlines for comment have been short. It appears that the DSC is examining a newer draft than that which the public commented on, and it is not clear which comments have been incorporated into the newer draft. We believe a great level of vetting of the Interim Plan and Delta Plan with the public as it is being drafted, accomplished in a manner and under a timeframe that allows the public time to comment on the actual draft being considered by the DSC, will help ensure an ultimately more fruitful, usable end product.